

## **Wanted You by EvieSmallwood**

**Series:** the tales of short stack and string bean [13]

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, Yes I Can Write Things Other Than Pure Mileven, although to be fair this is pretty much pure mileven, mike wheeler is a puppy and here is the proof, so many people in this one guys, what fun!, with a touch of teenage stress and insecurities!

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair (mentioned), Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington (Mentioned), Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair

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**Summary:**

El can't stop cutting up newspapers, Nancy is having a dilemma, and Hopper can't get out of bed before noon.

But hey, librarians are hot, right?

Or: el needs a job but ends up crying on mike's bed because 'long-distance relationships'

## Wanted You

### Author's Note:

I'm back at it again I can't beleaf

*I wanted you, but you didn't want me  
Good Lord, Heaven knows I'm bad with love  
I wanted you, but you didn't want me  
Good Lord, Heaven knows I've been banged up*

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Sunlight streams through the window above the sink—the bright kind, accompanied by a magnificently blue sky. It's the sort of day that demands to be spent outside.

Despite that, El is hunched over the kitchen table with a newspaper splayed out over the floral patterned formica. Her leg bounces up and down nervously; a habit she'd picked up from Mike and can't seem to kick.

There are so many job listings, but none of them seem to fit. They all require too much experience, education, or they're just... not her.

She doesn't want to wait tables at Benny's for the rest of her life. It's been a good job; flexible with her hectic high school schedule, and the people are nice. But the pay isn't nearly enough, which is a huge problem, considering she at least wants to take *some* college courses —maybe at the small community campus a few towns over.

Hopper would pay. He definitely would. But she doesn't *want* that.

She's already going to be living here an entire extra year after graduation.

"Hey, sweetie."

El's head snaps up at the sound of Joyce (who, over the course of the last two years of living together, had become 'mom') walking into the kitchen.

“Hey,” El replies, quickly folding up the paper as her mom searches through the cabinets for a suitably sized coffee mug. “Sleep good?”

Joyce shrugs. She goes for the tin of Folgers. “Okay, but Hop and his snoring, you know.”

El knows. *God*, does she. It’s like living with a damn bear.

“You should get ear plugs,” she suggests. The coffee machine starts to buzz. Joyce settles at the table just as El starts to rise.

“Hey,” her bony and feather-light hand comes down on El’s wrist. “What’s up, hon?”

She swallows. “Nothing.”

“What’re you reading?”

There’s an air of patient curiosity about Joyce, who gestures to the paper and raises her eyebrows with a half smile.

El hasn’t ever lied to her before. Not once. Not even about sneaking off to see Mike in the dead of night (because Joyce understands, and her inquires about protection are always enough to heed El), or getting bad grades on tests.

But for whatever stupid reason she can’t get herself to tell the truth now. Maybe it’s because if she shared her struggle, she knows Joyce would be offering her a job at the general store in a heartbeat (and El doesn’t want that). She doesn’t want *help* with this.

“I was just reading the obits,” El says smoothly. “Roger Jenkins died.”

This proves to be enough of a distraction. El silently thanks Old Man Watkins, wherever the hell he is now. “Really?”

El nods. She hands over the paper, which Joyce eagerly starts flipping through.

The coffee machine beeps. Down the hall, Hopper groans. A light in the bathroom is flicked on.

It's all so blissfully perfect and domestic, in this kitchen, in this house. She's with the people that saved her (that she saved). She couldn't feel any more at home.

The doorbell rings as El is halfway through preparing coffee just how she knows Joyce likes it. The older woman shoots up from the chair. "I'll get it!"

Her voice is dripping with excitement. El frowns, because *what on Earth is there to be excited about today?*

It's only after she hears his voice that she understands; Joyce's laugh-sobbing, the thump of a suitcase on the front porch—

"*Jonathan?!*"

A voice—Will—further down the hall; "Jonathan? Did someone say Jonathan?!"

El is already in his arms. She breathes in the familiar scent of cigarettes and weed and laundry detergent. Her brother.

"Hey, El," Jonathan presses a kiss to her cheek. "How's things? Nothing come to tear down the house, I hope?"

"Like I'd let that happen." She rolls her eyes, even if he's only kidding.

Then Will is barrelling practically out of nowhere (a toothbrush still hanging out of his mouth, wearing X-Men pajamas that might actually be from middle school given how short they are). He launches himself into Jonathan's arms. "Oh my god, you're here! I thought you couldn't make it!"

Jon shrugs, smirking. "I lied," he says. "Mom wanted to surprise you guys."

"This is gonna be the best spring break ever," Will proclaims. "Oh, hey, you haven't seen the house yet—I'll show you my room."

Then they're gone. El exchanges an exasperated glance with Joyce before grabbing her keys from the little porcelain dish near the door.

“I’m gonna go out,” she says. “I told Max I’d meet her for breakfast.”

Joyce nods. “Just be back for dinner, okay?”

“Yeah, definitely.”

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Max is waiting for her in their usual booth—the oldest one, with the most cracked leather. There are all sorts of carvings on the tabletop (six of them made by the party; their initials and an inscribed date), and best of all, it’s the most secluded and private one there.

Her red hair falls around her face in a curtain, glowing gold from the sun shining through it. Her chin is in her hand. When she spots El, she gives a weak wave.

“Your enthusiasm is flattering,” El says, sliding in across from her and setting down her book bag.

“Yeah, well,” Max leans back, glaring out the window.

“Well’ what?”

Max always needs pressing—whether it’s a little or a lot. This time, it’s the former; the words come tumbling out in an instant. “Lucas has been looking at apartments,” she says. “In Terre Haute.”

It makes sense, of course. Lucas and Mike are both going to Indiana State, and the commute would be a bitch from here. El has resigned herself to the fact that Mike is going to be leaving (even if it’s only two hours away, and he’ll be coming home every weekend).

“So Lucas wants you to move in with him?”

She shrugs. “Yeah, I guess. I mean, he didn’t ask, he just brought it up like it was something we’d been discussing for months.”

“Do you...” El swallows. “Do you not want to live with him?”

“It’s not that.” Max runs her hands through her hair. “I’d live with him, okay? I really would. But I... I don’t think I’m ready for that, y’know? We’re still so young and there’s just... I wanna know what

it's like to not have a curfew, and not have to lie about where I'm going and who I'm with, but I don't want to have to deal with... adult shit. Sharing a bed, cooking dinner together... I'm still a *teenager*."

El gets it. She really, *really* does. And that's when the idea forms.

"There are these positions open at the library," she says, grabbing the clipping from the newspaper she'd cut yesterday. It's been burning a hole in her jeans pocket. "Just low level assistants, or whatever, but the pay is good."

Max takes it, eyes scanning the slightly smudged words. She traces the carvings on the table while Max reads the listing. "You think I should work at the library?"

"I think *we* should," El corrects. "I mean, it's not the most exciting job ever, but... it's something, y'know?"

Max stares at her for a long moment, and just when El is sure she's about to start laughing, she nods. "Yeah, okay."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah," Max hands the paper back. "Long as we're together, right?"

El beams. "Right," she says. "And this way the boys can live together."

Max grins. "Definitely a plus."

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The key is under the little porcelain turtle, as always.

The Wheeler house is quiet, for mid-day, but the calendar on the fridge reads 'PTA MEETING; HOLLY', so El doesn't think much of it. She grabs a couple of grapes from the bowl on the counter to compensate for the breakfast she only ate half of, practically chokes them down given her nerves, and then makes her way upstairs.

Her stomach doesn't stop doing backflips until she sees him (until she remembers that hey, this is just Mike); sprawled out on his bed, all long limbs folded to accommodate the books and notes he's working

through. He's still in pajamas and his hair looks like it hasn't seen a comb for a little while, but she can't breathe.

El doesn't hesitate upon entry. He looks up as she walks in and grins, but she's already slipping off her jacket and shoes.

"El—"

"Shh," she climbs onto the bed, straddling him, pressing her lips to his own before he can even blink.

God, she's needed this. It's been two whole days.

Mike groans against her mouth. She loves that he doesn't even know what to do with himself, or her. Sometimes the way they do this is messy and chaotic, but still so fervent. She sighs with contentment, before tugging gently on his lower lip.

El is quick about slipping his shirt over his head (it's been *two whole days*). She takes in his flushed cheeks and blown pupils, takes in the way they're both already panting, before kissing him again.

She wraps her arms around his neck. His tongue presses against her own, all perfect, no problems—just biting and lightly scraping skin with fingernails and oh, there goes her shirt, too.

Mike tucks his hand into her pulled back mess of curls. She can't help but let out the smallest moan at the feeling. El wraps herself tighter around him. She wants no space, no separation. Heartbeats against heartbeats.

Mike shifts his weight, and then he's pushing her down onto her back. He starts pressing light kisses against her stomach. It tickles, drawing laughter out of her...

So why is she crying?

"El?"

Gone is her confidence (or maybe it was just a rush of blind passion). She feels suddenly open and vulnerable here, on his bed. There's nothing to hide behind.

It's all fucked.

"Hey," Mike tucks an arm under her back, pushing her hair from her eyes with the other. "What happened?"

El only sobs harder. It's all *so much*. Like the world dropped a bombshell into her lap but she knew it was coming.

"I'm gonna miss you," she manages after a while. It comes out as a sort of pathetic whimper. Her arms tighten around his waist because she really doesn't ever want to let him go.

How is she supposed to survive?

Mike's lips part, maybe with surprise. "El..."

She buries her face in the crook of his neck, breathing in the warm and familiar smell of him, pressing her cheek against his skin, and keeps crying. It's all she can do, and Mike lets her. They stay like that for almost too long before he speaks again.

"I'm gonna miss you, too. All the time. But I *swear* it'll be okay."

He says it, and means it, and somehow she knows it's true. It will be okay. They'd both die trying to make it that way (which is a little dramatic, it's two hours, but also: it's *two hours*).

She starts a little when something wet hits her shoulder. El draws back—her own sobbing reduced to weak and shaky breaths—to see tears on his cheeks. He looks like a dog that's been kicked. Mike pulls her as close as she can get.

They're intertwined. He's sniffing every few seconds. El runs her hands up and down his back, trying to keep her breaths even.

There's something about this; about the way that he's holding her. It says a lot of things that she can somehow understand; *I love you, I don't want to live without you, I don't know if I can handle it and I'm scared.*

El pulls back, taking his face in her hands. "You're the best person in the whole world."

Mike lets out a startled laugh. “I think that’s you,” he says. “But I’ll take it.”

This kiss is something else. It’s a promise. She feels like she’s thirteen again, surrounded by streamers and other kids with her ears full of sound. *This is it.*

Mike moves his lips up to her nose, and her forehead. Before she knows it, they’re carried away again, but it feels less feverish and more desperate. She wants to remember every detail.

His hand tightens on her upper thigh, the pressure felt easily through the fabric of her jean skirt. El sucks in a sharp breath. “Mike.”

Whining. She’s whining, and gasping as he bruises her skin with his kisses. His hand slips just under the hem of her skirt, lightly brushing the skin, making her groan with both exasperation and good god.

“Mike...”

“Hmm,” her shoulder, her neck, her jaw, her collarbone (and then lower, just inches from her breast).

This time, she struggles to get his name out. “Mike,” she digs her nails into his skin. “Stop.”

His withdraw is immediate, concern twisting his features. “Are you okay?”

El is so breathless it takes her a moment to reply, but when she does, he only gets more confused. “I’m gonna be a librarian.”

“What?”

She shakes her head. It’s stupid, but it feels important to tell him now (right now, before things go too far and she can’t speak at all). “Librarian assistant,” she amends.

Mike blinks. “Okay.” Then, “Librarians are hot.”

“Mike.”

“Hey, I’m not kidding,” he brushes a curl from her face, expression all stoic wisdom. “I mean, what do you love more than anything?”

“You.”

His cheeks flush. *Cute. Success.* “Besides people.”

Words, her long-time love affair. Learning each one, using them all, forming cohesive sentences—whether vocalised, thought, or written—will never fail to give her a small thrill. Taking back what was stolen one definition at a time.

“Books,” she replies. God, he knows how to soothe a concern.

“Right,” Mike nods. “So...”

“So you don’t think it’s stupid?” She inquires, touching on the root of her worry. “Or lame, compared to going to college full time, or art school, or—“

He shakes his head. “It’s amazing,” he says. “It’s you.”

At that, she smiles, and before she knows it he’s leaning down and kissing her neck again. “Guess I should get you a pair of those ugly horn-rimmed glasses,” he mumbles against her skin.

El whacks him. “Michael, I swear to god!”

His eyes meet her own. “Y’know what else is horny?”

“Jesus.”

He blows a raspberry against her stomach, which makes her squeal. “Wrong,” he says. “It’s me.”

“I hate you,” she rolls her eyes. *I love you.*

Mike grins again, leaning up and pressing his lips to her ear before gently biting, which makes her eyes flutter closed. A small sigh escapes her, which turns into a moan as his hand runs up the side of her torso (hot and there and wow), not stopping until his fingers are brushing her jawline.

She presses her hands against his stomach, heart skipping a beat at the feel of his smooth bare skin against her palms. His abdomen tightens against her touch, before the tension bleeds away and he melts, letting his body rest against her own. She loves the feel of him against her like this.

They're almost right back where they started when someone clears their throat.

Mike jerks away. El arches her back so that she can see, vision flipped, but it's still clearly Nancy (back for spring break, of course; El had completely forgotten that she and Jon were dating).

"You guys are so gross," she informs them.

El grins. "Hey, Nancy."

The older girl huffs. "I leave for ten minutes," she mutters. "God. How many times am I gonna have to walk in on you two?"

"Wrong question," Mike says, pulling El up with him. "You should be asking, when will we ever not be making out."

"And the answer is never."

Nancy groans. "I would literally pay to have my memory wiped of this shit."

"You're being dramatic," Mike tells her. "Like I didn't walk in on you and Steve literally all the time."

"That's not relevant," Nancy practically sputters.

"Yeah? So that *wasn't* him leaving your room this morning?"

"Mike."

"Nancy."

El rolls her eyes. "Everyone's lives would be so much easier if you three would just admit you're all dating."

“We’re not—“

El and Mike roll their eyes. “You’re dating.”

“I...” Nancy is speechless for a whole minute, staring off at something in the distance (or maybe nothing at all). Then she blinks. “I need a ride to Jonathan’s.”

Mike throws El a glance, *Oh my god is she actually gonna—?!* before jumping off the bed and grabbing his shirt. “Yeah, totally. Definitely. No problem.”

El grins. *Perfect. Cute. Idiot.*

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“Why do you have to drive like such an old man?”

Nancy’s inquiry is met with yet another glare from Mike.

“I am *not* driving like an old man. I’m in the car with two of the most important people in my life, I’m going slow. Sue me.”

Nancy leans back, folding her arms over her chest, but it’s clear that his comment won her over if the small smile is anything to judge by. “You could live a little.”

“Or I could *live*.”

El rolls her eyes in exasperation. It’s one thing being a sibling; it’s another having to listen to two others bicker. She changes the station to something louder to drown them out.

“I liked that song,” Mike protests.

“Well I like this one.”

“Well... okay then.”

“You two are *so* getting married.”

“Yeah, if she’d just say yes when I ask,” Mike blurts. El’s cheeks flush, but he doesn’t seem fazed at all. If it was an accident he’s not letting

it show.

“I will,” she manages eventually, briefly glancing at Nancy’s shocked face in the rear view mirror. It feels a little like she’s assuring them both. “Someday, I promise.”

“Later,’ she says. ‘Someday,’ she says.”

“You don’t even have a ring.”

“Do too!”

Mike is blushing, but El is too surprised to care. “You have a ring? When did you get a ring?” *And why didn’t you tell me?!*

“Like, a year ago—oh my god stop—”

She curls her fists to stop the shaking. *Oh my god oh my god.* “I can’t believe you got me a ring. Why don’t you ever use *that* to propose, you stupid idiot?!”

Mike sputters. “I don’t have it on me all the time. I keep it in my sock drawer, like a decent human being.”

A grin breaks her face. She shakes her head in wonder. “*You bought me a ring...I might just have to marry you.*”

“Seriously?”

His face is so full of hope, and she hates to crush that. “Eventually.”

“Mother of god!”

“*Michael.*”

They both jump. Nancy is still in the back seat, of course, looking both amused and disappointed.

Mike tilts his head before reaching to rifle through the centre console. “You good back there? Want a little juice box? We have apple.”

Nance grimaces. “That’s probably like four years old.”

El grabs it from Mike's hands (*eyes on the road*) and searches for the date stamp. "Wrong! Oh, look, it expired the day we first had—"

She breaks off with a blush (*fuck fuck fuck*). Nancy is already reaching up and snatching it away. Her eyes widen. "This was like two years ago!"

Mike clears his throat. "Hmm? What? Oh, look at that, we're here!"

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"So what was this like?"

It's only much later that the question comes; after Nancy spent hours talking to Jonathan and Mike had started making dinner. El is with the older girl in the station wagon. The windows are rolled down, radio on, and Nancy's cigarette isn't even halfway finished.

It's not like she can just run away. She doesn't even really want to. Nancy's always been like a sister. She wouldn't even know about sex if it weren't for her.

And so El grins at the held up juice box, eyeing the date (7/13/87). "The supply closet at the public pool. Definitely not the most romantic first time ever."

Nancy practically cackles. "*Seriously, Hopper?*"

She shrugs. "I guess I've always had trouble keeping it in my pants when it comes to Mike."

Grinning, Nancy takes a drag. "This is probably the grossest question of all time, and please spare me the details, but... Is he good?"

Her face is absolutely on fire. *God.* "Uh, yeah," El tosses the juice from hand to hand, needing something to do. "He's good." A beat. "So good." *Dear god.*

Nancy makes a gagging sound. "Yeah, I shouldn't have asked."

"Um," El swallows. "Are you?"

"Good?" She stubs the cigarette out in the snuffbox. "I mean, I guess.

Jon and Steve seem to think so. What about you?"

Is she? She really doesn't know. "I... hope so?"

Nancy frowns. She shifts on the leather seat, suddenly intrigued. "Well, he likes it, right?"

El nods. "Yeah."

"And... you do things he asks you to do more of?"

Her cheeks are probably so red. "Yeah, I guess."

Nancy shrugs. "I think it's safe to say you're probably pretty good."

El can't help the small smile that forms. "Pretty good," she agrees.

They both jump when someone knocks on the window behind Nancy, who gasps and then rolls her eyes. "Speak of the devil."

The window is rolled down. Mike leans in, eyes on El. "Dinner's ready, shortstack," he says, before turning to Nancy and sticking his tongue out. "I burnt your toast."

"You're actually the worst."

"Leave stingy alone," El defends, feeling a ridiculous rush of love for her stupid boy. "He made dinner."

Mike grins at her. She could die looking at those eyes and never feel anything but peace.

"Like my lady said, I made dinner," he pulls the car door open. "Inside, before it gets cold."

They eat dinner—all of them, together—and it doesn't feel like anything but family. It feels like home. She doesn't want anything more than just this.

**Author's Note:**

So! Mileven makeouts with OTHER characters & drama outside of their relationship! I figured we could all use a little refreshment :D

Nancy is having a salty day but she ships mileven just as hard as the rest of us and that's the tea

Also! If you guys wanna follow me on tumblr, my url is @madmaxinemayfield